Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in forensic psychiatry: A review

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Abstract

INTRODUCTION:
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common and challenging childhood neurobehavioral disorders. ADHD may have behavioral consequences and involvements in minor and serious crimes. Our work aims to establish links between ADHD and forensic psychiatry.

METHODS:
A review of international scientific literature concerning the relationship between ADHD and forensic psychiatry was conducted using the PudMed electronic database. We used the Mesh terms: "attention deficit hyperactivity disorder" and "forensic psychiatry". We also used the "related articles" function of PubMed, the bibliography of selected articles and the Google Scholar database to identify possible additional papers.

RESULTS:
The prevalence of ADHD in prison populations may vary but remain higher than those found in the general population. Violence committed by a person with ADHD seems to be against other persons rather than property offences. Reactive-impulsive violence seems to be more prevalent than pro-active instrumental violence. The existence of ADHD does not appear as a risk factor of recidivism. The violence risk may be increased by the occurrence of comorbidities as conduct disorders and mental deficiency. There may exist a preferential association between ADHD and antisocial personality disorder or substance abuse which both increase the risk of violence.

DISCUSSION:
To put in perspective forensic psychiatry and ADHD allowed us to identify typology of violence, epidemiological aspect of ADHD in a prison environment and comorbidities involved in the risk of violence. This research permits to precise elements of prevention, diagnosis and assistance in the management of violent behaviour in ADHD and in expert practice.